



Oregon

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DATE: February 9, 2021

TO: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

FROM: Abby Boudouris, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: HB 2955 of 2021 Session

HB 2955 uses a product stewardship model to establish a statewide program for the collection and environmentally sound management of designated household products that produce hazardous waste, including pesticides, solvents and flammable liquids. The program would be similar to Oregon's successful Electronics and Paint Product Stewardship Programs, which were established in 2007 and 2009 respectively. In addition, the 2019 legislature passed HB 3273 establishing a product stewardship program for the safe disposal of unused medications in Oregon with statewide collection becoming available later this year. Product stewardship programs for household hazardous waste (HHW) products operate in British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario.

Product stewardship is an environmental management strategy for minimizing a product's environmental, health, safety and social impacts throughout all stages of the product's life. Product stewardship shifts the primary financial and operational responsibility for minimizing these impacts from local and state government to producers because, as the designer of the products, they have the greatest ability to reduce impacts across the products entire life cycle and are in the best position to know the contents of the products and the risks associated with improper end-of-life management. Under this model, suppliers, retailers and consumers also play a role ensuring a product is managed properly.

Common components of a products stewardship law include requirements for manufacturers to establish and operate a convenient statewide system, ensure the product is managed in an environmentally sound manner at end-of-life, ensure the program is funded, and report annually on the success of the program. Operationally, the material collection and end-of-life management system is usually managed by one or more stewardship organizations operating on behalf of the manufacturers. HB 2955 includes these elements and proposes a stewardship organization model for household hazardous waste products.

DEQ estimates that about 13,000 tons of hazardous materials are disposed of annually in Oregon. Risks from HHW stem from improper use, handling, storage and disposal. Some of these products can be toxic in small quantities and represent significant hazards to human health and the environment. Hazardous materials placed in the garbage can seriously injure sanitation workers, who can be poisoned or injured by acids, fires, and explosions. Improper use and handling of household hazardous wastes can contaminate surface water, groundwater, and air, resulting in exposure to humans.

Because of the high costs for construction and operation of facilities to collect HHW, 17 counties in Oregon continue to lack permanent HHW collection sites for residents to use and have access only to occasional HHW collection events. A stewardship program for HHW, as proposed in HB 2955 would support existing collection and expand collection opportunities throughout Oregon.

DEQ's role in the program proposed in HB 2955 would be to provide oversight of the stewardship organization, including review and approval of submitted plans, review of substantive program changes and annual reports. DEQ has no position on the bill.

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